



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Disaster Preparedness for People With Cancer

This information will help you make sure you're prepared in case of a disaster.

Disasters can happen any time of year, no matter where you live. They can interrupt your access to electricity, gas, water, transportation, and telephone services. It's important for everyone to be prepared, but there are some extra steps you should take during your cancer treatment.

## Make a Plan

- Making a plan can help you and your family stay safe, healthy, and connected during a disaster.
- Talk with your doctor about what to do and how to stay in contact during a disaster.
- Talk about your plan with your family, friends, and anyone else who may be able to help you during a disaster.
- Sign up to receive emergency alerts through your county or town.
- Make sure anyone who is able to turn off the gas, water, and electricity in your home, knows how to do this.

- ❑ Have a plan for your pets.
- ❑ If you need life-sustaining equipment, such as pumps, oxygen tanks, contact your utility company.
- ❑ Keep all your medications together. Store them somewhere you'll be able to get to in an emergency.
  - ❑ Include the medications you take every day, as well as a supply of other medications you may need. These might include medications to prevent nausea, constipation, diarrhea, allergic reactions, and fevers.

## Make a Basic Ready Kit

A basic ready kit is a collection of items you may need in an emergency. Preparing a basic ready kit will help keep you and your family safe and healthy during a disaster.



Your basic ready kit should include:

- ❑ 1 gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- ❑ At least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food (food that won't go bad quickly) for each person
- ❑ Battery-powered radio and a Weather (NOAA) Radio with tone alert, and extra batteries for both
- ❑ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ❑ Cell phone with cell phone charger

- Extra house and car keys
- Contact lenses or glasses
- Soap
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- First aid kit
- Wipes, garbage bags, and plastic ties
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Tools, including a wrench or pliers, to turn off the gas, water, and electricity
- Whistle to signal for help
- Manual can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Emergency cash
- Copy of your list of emergency contacts
- Copy of your advance directives, such as a Health Care Proxy form
- Copy or scanned image of your prescriptions and the phone number for your pharmacy
- 1 complete change of warm clothing and shoes per person, including:
  - A jacket or coat

- Long pants
- A long sleeve shirt
- Sturdy shoes
- A hat and gloves
- A sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Undergarments

## **Personalize Your Ready Kit**

- Add extra first aid items you may need to your basic first aid kit.
  - If you have a low white blood cell count, you're at high risk of developing an infection. This makes it very important for you to have clean first aid supplies in your kit. Store them in a sealable storage bag, such as Ziploc<sup>®</sup>, to stay dry.
  - If you have any medical devices, such as a central venous catheter (CVC), drain, or ostomy, make sure you have extra dressings and supplies.
- Include what you need to manage side effects of your chemotherapy or radiation treatment.
  - If you're receiving capecitabine (Xeloda<sup>®</sup>) or fluorouracil (5-FU), pack enough loperamide (Imodium<sup>®</sup>) for diarrhea or petroleum jelly (Vaseline<sup>®</sup>) or Bag Balm<sup>®</sup> if you have severe hand and foot syndrome.
  - If you're receiving radiation treatment and have dry

mouth, include Biotene® mouthwash or other supplements that your doctor recommends.

## **Taking care of children**

- If you have children, include games and activities to keep them busy, as well as the same supplies you have for the rest of the people in your household. If any are infants, include baby supplies, such as formula, bottles, and diapers.

## **Taking care of pets**

- Prepare a ready kit for each pet. It should include:
  - A 3-day supply of food and water.
  - A manual can opener
  - First aid kit
  - Medication
  - Pet toys or any other items to reduce your pet's stress
  - Cleaning supplies
    - You may need a litter box, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items, and household bleach.
  - Transport supplies
    - You will need to transport your pet safely. Be sure you have a sturdy leash or harness.
    - You may also need a carrier large enough for your pet to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down.
  - Current photos and descriptions of your pets to help others

identify them in case you and your pets become separated.

## Print Important Information

If there is a disaster, you'll need to have important information on paper in case you aren't able to use your phone or other device. Your cell phone may not work, and batteries can drain quickly.

Write down important phone numbers, and include local and out of state contacts.

Name	Relationship	Phone Number	Email

Write down the contact information for all of your healthcare providers.

Name	Type of Provider	Phone Number	Hospital

Write down the exact diagnosis and stage of your cancer. If you're receiving chemotherapy or radiation, know where you are in your treatment cycle. During a disaster you may need to see a doctor who is unfamiliar with your treatment.

<b>Cancer Type</b>	<b>Cancer Stage</b>	<b>Treatment Notes</b>

If you're in a clinical trial, write down the information about the trial so that you can receive the proper care in an emergency.

<b>Clinical Trial Registration Number (#NCT)</b>	<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Treatment</b>

Write down your medical and prescription insurance information.

<b>Company</b>	<b>ID Number</b>	<b>Group Number</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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